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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS - A - Wednesday, August 3,1932

(All Regions)

Speaking Time: 10 minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Again Station _____ brings you the Primer for Town Farmers, with Neighbor Thompson. Mr. Thompson talks today, from very recent experience, on what happens when you let the garden go along of its own sweet will for a week or so. All right, Neighbor...

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If this talk were to be distinguished with a title, I'd call it "What price vacation?"

Vacations usually leave some kind of morning-after feeling. And I always get this feeling most acutely when I inspect my lawn and garden and shrubbery to see what's happened during my absence.

I can always be sure that plenty has happened.

I've decided that the best procedure is to arrive back home after dark; get a good night's sleep; eat a hearty breakfast; and then go out to the garden expecting the worst. This is what you call building up a mental attitude. Then I work as long as my mental attitude holds out.

This time, the first thing to do was to get out the hose. I gave the shrubbery and flower borders around the house a good watering. Then I brought out the lawn mower and proceeded to give the lawn a vigorous going over.

Now, it may be that your grass, like mine, is starting to turn brown and to burn out in spots. I've found that about the best remedy is to set the lawn sprinkler on these spots, and let the water run for 20 or 30 minutes. Then, while the sprinkler is going, scatter a very small amount of nitrate of soda into the spray. Use about an ounce or ounce and a half, assuming that your spray covers an area 12 or 14 feet in diameter.

Of course, sulphate of ammonia is just as good, perhaps better. In fact, any quickly available form of nitrogen will answer the purpose. I just happened to have nitrate of soda on hand.

In any event, the nitrate injects new life into the grass plants, and enables them to regain their lost vigor quickly. And by the way, it is important to add the nitrate along with the water. Otherwise it might do more harm than good. The plants have to get their nitrogen through the roots, and so it must be in liquid form or in solution.

Now, among other things, I noticed on my trip of inspection, that the lawn and shrubbery borders needed considerable tidying-up.

Also, the weeks in my vegetable garden and among the small fruits needed immediate attention.

Quite a few of the raspberry plants that I set out last spring have died. I'll have to make replacements this fall or early next spring.

Some of the strawberry plants I set out for a new bed have also died. The bed needs considerable filling-in, to make a perfect stand.

Of course, some of these things would have happened anyway; but I could have prevented most of them if I had stayed at home. However, there's no use crying over spilled milk, nor over plants that are dead. Fortunately, there is still plenty of time to put the lawn and garden back into good shape.

I'm also thinking that 'll be giving some attention to perennials. Now is the season when many folks sow seeds of several perennials, to get plants for next year's blooming.

One of the first jobs will be to clean all of the old soil out of the seed-bed. Then give the bed and the subsoil a good soaking with mercuric bichloride solution, to kill any disease germs which may be lurki ng in the soil.

You may be interested to know how I mix the mercuric bichloride, which of course is deadly poisonous and has to be handled carefully. Well, first of all I have a wooden barrel. I buy 4 ounces of the mercuric bichloride, place it in the empty barrel, and then pour in a gallon or two of fairly hot water, to dissolve the chemical. After it is completely dissolved I fill the barrel up with cold water. This gives about 40 gallons of the solution. Then I take my sprinkling can and completely soak the soil of the plant bed.

AFTER I have emptied the sprinkler and the barrel, I always wash them out thoroughly, using plenty of water.

Then, of course, comes the job of sifting out a pile of good new soil and placing it in the seed-bed. This is for the perennials that you may want to transplant, such as foxglove, delphinium, pansies, hollyhocks, and Canterbury bells. Many folks find it best to sow the seeds of all perennials which have straight or tap roots right where they are to grow, because it is difficult to transplant them. However, hollyhocks have straight roots; and I have never had the least trouble transplanting them from seed-bed to garden, provided I transplant them while they are small.

I mentioned last week that this is the season when many folks will be transplanting or dividing the bearded irises. In fact, the best time for this work is right after the plants bloom. We may also begin dividing and re-setting peonies most any time now. And remember, as W.R.B. has told us so many times, don't use any manure in direct contact with peony roots; and set the root divisions exactly 2 inches deep if you want plenty of good blooms.

Some of the most successful peony growers I know use only bone meal as a fertilizer. They mix a large handful of bone meal with the soil when they prepare the holes for the peony roots. Then about once a year---preferably in fall or winter---they scatter a handful of bone meal around each plant and work it into the soil.

One point that W.R.B. always emphasizes about planting the rhizomes, or enlarged roots of bearded irises, is this: Don't plant them too deep. In fact,

they'll do better when they are practically on top of the ground. Then they send their rootlets into the soil for nourishment. The rhizomes are apt to rot if you cover them to any considerable depth.

Here again, bone meal is one of the best fertilizers.

And another thing: Always trim back the leaves when you divide and reset the bearded irises. This relieves the strain on the roots until they become established in their new homes.

Now, when the weather is hot and moist much of the time, you may have some trouble with your perennial seedlings rotting or damping off right at the surface of the ground. Careful watering will often prevent that. But if the trouble does start, you can often check it by watering your plants lightly with the mercuric chloride solution---the same solution I recommended for the seed-bed, except that it is a good idea to make it weaker for watering purposes. Say, one ounce to 15 gallons of water.

Another of W.R.B.'s pointers on getting perennials started in summer, is this: It is a good plan to shade the bed somewhat until the seeds come up. Many folks use cheese-cloth stretched on frames. Cheese-cloth makes a good shade, but I believe that a lath shade, with the openings the same width as the lath, is really better. With the lath shade, the bars of sunlight travel across the bed giving alternate sunshine and shadow, which is a little better than a uniform shading.

Then, there is one other job I've got on the books to attend to during August. I'm going to transplant 2 or 3 evergreens. I have a couple of evergreens at the front of the house along the porch. They have grown tall and straggly, and I want to move them to the back of the lot and replace them with new ones from the nursery. Of course, this work has to be done in ample time for the evergreens to form new roots before cold weather.

Now, before my time is up, let me repeat W.R.B.'s recommendations on putting new life into a lawn that is turning brown and burning in spots. Here's what he does, and I've found that it works fine on my grass:

He sets the sprinkler on the brown spots and lets the water run for 20 or 30 minutes. While the sprinkler is going he scatters a small amount of nitrate of soda---or any other quickly available form of nitrogen---into the spray. His spray covers an area 12 to 14 feet in diameter, and for this area he uses from an ounce to an ounce and a half of fertilizer.

That's all for today. I'll be seeing you again next Wednesday.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and Gentlemen, you have been listening to the Primer for Town Farmers, brought to you by Neighbor Thompson. Through the cooperation of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Station _____ presents this feature each Wednesday at this same hour.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS — Wednesday, August 10, 1932

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes — All Regions

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the time for Station _____ in _____ to present Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. The subject for this occasion is KEEPING POULTRY IN THE BACK YARDS. Anything new on that subject, Neighbor Thompson?

No -- nothing new.

Just a few timely suggestions.

This is August, and according to Mr. A. R. Lee, poultry specialist of the United States Department of Agriculture, one of the best months of the year to "spot" and "cull" the unprofitable layers from the backyard flock.

His plan, with a few exceptions of course, is to market all hens that have stopped laying by this time. In other words, the first of August is too early for a hen to start her vacation. A good, profitable hen ought to be laying right along at this season of the year. If she isn't -- there's something wrong. Probably one of two things.

Either poor management, or poor laying stock.

Let me illustrate with a page from my own experience.

Eggs were not worth very much last summer, and I couldn't see any special reason why I should spend all my spare time looking after chickens when it didn't amount to very much. On the other hand, fishing in our community was unusually good. And to tell you the plain truth, I neglected our backyard flock and spent a little too much of my spare time casting for black bass.

Enjoyable? I'll say it was. I got many thrills, and hooked a good many fish. But Mother Thompson didn't get the usual number of eggs from our hens during the month of August. And by September most of the hens had just about stopped laying.

The answer to our problem was plain enough. We had good stock. The best we could get. No question about that. Our trouble was, as Mother Thompson told me on many occasions -- NEGLECT. Neglect in not keeping the laying

quarters clean and comfortable, and neglect in not keeping the feed hoppers well filled with the proper feeds, and the drinking fountains filled with clean, fresh water.

Yes siree, neglect will do more to cut down egg production during the hot summer months than almost anything else. After last summer's sad experience, I'm firmly convinced that you can have the finest laying stock in the world, and the finest looking poultry house imaginable and still get nowhere collecting eggs unless you take care of your chickens.

You've got to pay attention to details if you expect to collect eggs from a back-yard flock during the hot, summer months. At least that's been our experience over a period of more than ten years.

And as Mother Thompson says, it's hardly fair to say cull every hen that has stopped laying by the first of August unless you have given that hen a fair chance to show what she can do.

In other words, don't cull a hen just because she is not laying on the first of August when the fault is YOURS. First give a hen a fair chance by bringing her up to the end of the laying season in a good physical condition. If she starts her vacation in spite of this and is from a good laying strain -- then it's time to act because the trouble is probably in the hen. She is likely a bad producer.

The national egg-laying standard says that for farm flocks a good healthy hen ought to lay an average of 16 eggs during the month of March, nearly 17 eggs in April, 17 in May, 15 in June, 14 in July, and 13 in August. That's the average monthly standard of production, and Mr. Lee tells us that a good, well-fed hen will make it.

As a matter of fact, Mother Thompson's hens don't stop at the average. They go beyond that figure -- that is, provided I don't spend too much time fishing.

Last summer's experience taught me a lesson, and I now take better care of our layers during the summer months than I used to. But in spite of good stock, good care, and attention, unprofitable layers will find their way into our flock and we find it necessary to do some culling as the season advances.

For instance, Mother Thompson reminded me just last evening that we have 3 or 4 hens that have, for no good reason, dropped off in egg production, and that August is a good month to "spot" the unprofitable producers and tag them for the baking pan.

August, so Mr. Lee tells us, is one of the best months of the year to "spot" unprofitable layers and to find out why they are dropping off in egg production.

Mother Thompson and I use three guides for spotting poor layers and unprofitable producers at this season of the year.

To begin with, a low producer, as Mr. Lee points out, will nearly always stop laying or fall off in production EARLIER in the season than a good producer. And so, when one of our hens suddenly stops laying at this season and begins her vacation, we investigate the trouble at once.

Feed, water, and housing conditions are all investigated. If these are all right, we pick up old Sister Hen and give her what we call a hand-to-hand examination.

Bright eyes, red comb, pale legs, and broken and worn nest feathers are all signs of a good layer. The opposite characteristics indicate a poor layer. So, when one of our hens stops laying at this season and a hand-to-hand examination reveals dull eyes, pale comb, colored legs, and nice, slick nest feathers, we tag that hen for the chopping block because we have learned from experience that such signs at this season of the year indicate an unprofitable producer.

Broodiness is our second guide for poor production. Poor producers not only go broody early in the season but they repeat at frequent intervals throughout the summer.

And since a broody hen is a total loss to the laying flock, my plan is to cull a hen that goes broody more than three times during the summer season. A broody hen in August is a sure sign of a poor producer, and according to Mr. Lee has no place in your back-yard flock if you're out for profitable production.

Age is our last guide for poor production. Our plan is to get rid of the old hens as soon as they pass the stage of profitable production and before they develop into disease carriers and troublemakers.

Mr. Lee says that pullets lay one-third more eggs the first year than they lay as hens the second year year of production.

So, if you want to spot the low producers early in the season this year, Mr. Lee says, mark the hens that stop laying early. Those that go broody early and often. And finally get rid of the old hens before they pass the stage of profitable production and before they develop into disease carriers and troublemakers.

And now until this time next Wednesday, Mother Thompson and I bid you good-bye and good luck.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT: And that, ladies and gentlemen, was Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS coming to you from Station _____ in _____ through the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS. Wednesday, August 17, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY.

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes. All Regions.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT: Once again we refresh your memory by telling you that this is Station_____in_____ presenting Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. Neighbor Thompson's subject for this occasion is COMPOST. But isn't it early for that subject, Neighbor Thompson?

No, indeed.

This is the seventeenth of August, and it won't be long until Jack Frost will be spreading his white mantle over a large part of the country, the leaves will be falling, and it will be compost time for the back yard gardener.

Mother Thompson and I have found from long years of experience that you've got to have good soil to raise good flowers and vegetables. And one of the best ways for the average back yard gardener to maintain a good soil is to maintain a good compost bed.

I'm often asked what kind of materials make the best compost. And my answer is always the same: "Any material that will combine with other materials to make a good potting or plant-bed soil."

Mother Thompson and I have been making compost piles every winter for the last ten years. And this is about the way we do it.

We have a place in one corner of our back yard garden where we pile all of the pieces of sod, grass, weeds, and trash that accumulate from the lawn and garden during the summer and fall.

Then in the fall of the year I rake up the leaves and pine needles that fall on my lawn and in the gutters and add them to the compost pile. But I always add and mix a little sulphate of ammonia with the leaves as I add them to the compost. That's to make them decay. If you don't use something to help the leaves decay they won't be composted enough for an ideal seed bed by the time you're ready to plant in the spring.

Mother Thompson and I have a little poultry house and keep a few chickens in our back yard. From time to time Mother Thompson has me spread clean straw in the poultry house for the hens to scratch in. Well, in three or four weeks the hens have reduced this straw to a lot of fine particles and mixed with it a considerable quantity of poultry droppings.

And since poultry droppings are very rich in plant food, this mixture goes, naturally, to the compost pile in the corner of the garden.

And once in a while I'm able to pick up a few wheelbarrow loads of cleanings from a dairy barn. And that helps wonderfully in the making of an ideal compost.

W.R.B. our garden adviser has an arrangement with a dairyman who lives three or four miles from us and every now and then he brings W.R.B. several bags of rich compost on the running board of his automobile. To this rich compost W.R.B. adds garden soil, decaying weeds, the cleanings from his poultry house, and a little superphosphate. Then he mixes the materials all together and lets them decay to form soil for use in his flower borders.

And does that mixture make flowers? Well, I'll say it does. W.R.B. has the finest flowers in our entire neighborhood, and a lot of his success is due to the ideal soil that he uses in his flower beds.

But you don't have to have poultry droppings or dairy barn cleanings to make a good compost. There are other manures that work just as well.

I have a friend in another city who uses the cleanings from his horse stable for his compost. He gets good results too. Has one of the best back yard gardens in his community. And the prettiest lawn you ever saw.

Dr. C. C. Fletcher of the United States Department of Agriculture says that the reason barnyard manure makes such an ideal foundation for a compost is because the manure is generally damp, rich in nitrogen, and furnishes an ideal field for bacteria.

It takes bacteria, you know, to break down the cellulose in a compost pile, and the quicker the bacteria start to work in your compost, the quicker it will be ready for the garden or flower beds.

Dr. Fletcher says that one of the most common ways to make a compost pile is to alternate layers of stable manure with waste and absorbent materials, such as dried leaves, peat, muck, and sod.

It is necessary that you keep the compost slightly moist because that is the ideal condition for bacteria to work. And that the compost ought to be thoroughly turned several times during the season in order to mix the materials.

He believes that you get better results when at least half of the compost material is manure. But if you can't get that much manure he says go ahead and make the compost anyway provided you can get a small amount of manure---enough to innoculate the heap with the bacteria of decomposition.

Then there's another way of making compost. This method often fits into the plans of the small back yard gardener who wants only a small amount of compost or potting soil. Here it is in a nutshell.

Get a bag of prepared cattle manure. It's dry, of course. Mix this with several times its bulk of good garden soil. Add about a cupful of bone meal to each bushel of the mixture. After thoroughly mixing, spread the compost in a flat pile, wet it thoroughly, and allow it to rot for several weeks before it is wanted for use.

Dr. Fletcher says that dry leaves, weeds, sweepings from the house and barn, coffee grounds, banana peelings, soot, and wood ashes, all have fertilizer value. He says that these and many other materials around the average home should be saved and either applied directly to the soil or composted with manure for future use.

We had quite an argument in our community club last winter about the use of coal ashes in the compost pile. We had to finally call on Dr. Fletcher to settle it for us.

He says that coal ashes have little value as a fertilizer, but that when they are sifted and mixed with heavy clay soils they make such soils more productive by loosening them up and by improving the moisture and tillage conditions.

Wood ashes contain from 5 to 10 per cent of potash, and ordinary "soot" about 3 per cent of nitrogen. And the ordinary way of applying these fertilizers is to put them directly on the soil. Although Dr. Fletcher says that there's no special reason for or against running them through the compost if you want to.

Now let's summarize.

First, it's about time to start the winter compost pile.

Second, manure is an ideal foundation for a compost, and at least half of the compost should be composed of manure if the manure is available.

Third, any material that will decompose and make good potting of plant-bed soil will make compost.

Fourth, keep the compost pile damp to encourage the growth and development of bacteria.

And finally, turn the compost several times during the season to mix the materials.

That's all for today. And now, until this time next Wednesday Mother Thompson and I bid you good bye and good luck.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT: And that, ladies and gentlemen, concludes Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS from Station_____in_____.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS

Wednesday, August 24, 1932.

★ AUG 1 0 1932 ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY.

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes.

All Regions.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT: Once again we remind you that this is Station_____ in_____ presenting Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. The Neighbor's subject for this occasion is CONCRETE. And he's going to present concrete facts about a concrete subject. Are you ready, Neighbor Thompson?

Yes, I'm ready.

I've just finished laying a concrete driveway along one side of our house, and one of our neighbors wanted me to tell you about it. That's why I'm talking on concrete.

But I don't claim to be an expert or an authority on making concrete. Not at all. For a number of years I've been laying my own concrete when I needed it and during that time have picked up a few pointers. And that's what I'm passing on to you listeners at this time.

Mother Thompson and I have done a great deal of concreting in the past ten years and we've never had a particle of trouble making the concrete stick or hold up provided we followed instructions and made it right. We've had plenty of trouble when we didn't make it right. So, my first suggestion to the beginner is, get a good concrete bulletin from some source and read what it says about making concrete. We can get such bulletins in our community from three sources. The county agent, the State College of Agriculture, and from the local representative of big cement companies.

Strange as it may seem, concrete will set-up under water, and it will even hold water, yet may be broken all to pieces if water stands in the foundation, therefore, soil drainage is an important point to consider when laying out walks and drives around the average place.

That's because standing water softens the foundation under the concrete or may freeze in winter and heave the concrete causing it to crack and break. And when concrete begins to break and crack under its own weight or from an unusual load or by heaving it's on the road to permanent destruction. And so my second suggestion to the beginner is, be sure the foundation has drainage.

I have solved the drainage problem in some instances by providing a cushion or porous foundation of sand or cinders. And in other instances by

tapping wet soils with 4-inch drain pipes. But it doesn't make much difference what kind of a system of drainage you use just so you drain the water out of the foundation. The important thing is to provide concrete with a foundation that is well drained and solid.

There are two types of concrete pavements in general use today. One is called the two-course type and the other the one-course type.

In the two-course type the concrete is laid in two layers. The first layer is a thick base of ordinary concrete, and the second layer is a thin top coat of rich mortar.

The two-course type of construction is recommended where you want a smooth finish. I use the two-course type practically altogether for walks, but not for driveways.

For driveways I use the one-course type of construction because it wears better than the two-course type and can be laid more cheaply and with less labor. The one-course type is laid in one layer of fairly rich mixture, and is considered better for around-the-house or general purpose concrete because it wears well and the surface is not so slippery.

The thickness of a concrete slab should be made according to the load it's to carry. But about 4 inches is the minimum for general outdoor use. If concrete is to bear heavy loads, or if the foundation is insecure, it's safer to make it thicker, say about 6 inches. My general walks are made of 4-inch slabs, but my new driveway is 7 inches thick.

I learned a never-to-be-forgotten lesson from my first driveway. It was 5 inches thick and carried the weight of our little automobile all right. But one day we ordered coal and a 4-ton truck made the delivery while we were away from home. We got the coal all right, but the truck broke our concrete drive into a thousand pieces. And that's why I say the thickness of a concrete slab depends on the load it's to carry. Of course you can reinforce concrete with iron rods and woven wire. And that makes it stronger. But it adds to the expense, and to my way of thinking is seldom necessary around the average home.

Along with good drainage and the proper thickness comes proper <u>jointing</u>. Yes siree, good pavements have <u>joints</u>. And what's more it uses 'em too. In this way. In hot weather concrete expands, and in cold weather it draws up. The joints allow for the contraction and expansion, and prevent the concrete from "buckling" and breaking into unsightly cracks like cob-webs.

My plan of preventing concrete walks and drives from cracking is to locate an expansion joint at a building, a tree, a curb, and 40 feet apart in straight runs of the walk or drive. One of the best ways to make an expansion joint is to leave a space about a half inch wide and as deep as the concrete is thick. Fill this space with tar, tar paper, or some other compressible material.

A reliable brand of Portland cement is recommended for all concrete work. The word Portland merely signifies a certain kind of cement the same as face brick which does not mean any one company's product. Get your cement

from a reliable dealer and keep it in a dry place until you are ready to use it. And don't be afraid to talk to the dealer. Tell him what you are planning to make. He may have suggestions. I've picked up a lot of good pointers by talking over my concrete problems with cement, and sand and gravel dealers.

And speaking of sand and gravel reminds me that these materials should be free from foreign matter and the gravel fairly well graded in size.

If you want to test the quality of sand, rub it between your hands. If it makes your hands dirty it's a good idea to run what's called the water test. Put four inches of sand in a pint preserving jar, and fill the jar with clear water to within an inch of the top. Put on the lid, shake the jar until the sand and water are well mixed and then let it settle. The sand will go to the bottom, and the dirt will form on top of the sand. If you find more than three-eights of an inch of dirt on top of the sand it's too dirty to make good concrete. Either wash the sand, or don't use it. If you want a "bum" job of concrete use dirty sand, rotten rock, or poor cement, and you'll get it. I know from experience that the best concrete is made from clean sand, hard rock, good water, and fresh cement.

A mixture of one--two--four, is known in some sections as a "standard" mixture. In plain language that means one part of cement, two parts of sand, and four parts of gravel or crushed rock. That mixture makes a good concrete. But you can make it stronger for water tanks, etc by using one part of cement, 1 1/2 parts of sand, and three parts of gravel or stone or a weaker mixture as 1:3:5 for foundations, if you like. And there are still other mixtures, for instance mortar for the top of pavements is mixed generally 1 to 2. This means 1 part cement and 2 parts coarse sand. Gravel is not used in mortar, only cement and coarse sand.

Only good clean water gives the best results in the mix. Acid, alkali and sea waters should be avoided. The amount of water used in mixing is very, very important and directions in bulletins should be faithfully followed if a strong concrete is needed.

That's all for today. And now until this time next Wednesday Mother Thompson and I bid you good bye and good luck.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT: And that was Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS coming to you from Station_____in_____. This next program will come to you from this station at this time next Wednesday.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

RECEIVED AUG 31 1932 U. S. Department of Agriculture

PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS — Wednesday, August 31, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes. — All Regions.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT: This is Wednesday, August 31---Station _____ on the air, presenting Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS, prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. In today's program the Neighbor gives us some tips on the fall care of lawns, and a few suggestions on how to make a new lawn. All right, Neighbor, start your story.

---oooOooo---

Well, as I was saying to the people here in the studio a while ago this is the season of the year when the progressive people in our community become "lawn conscious."

Every ambitious man tries to keep up the looks of his lawn, and some successful fellows in the community think that they have the most beautiful lawns in the world.

Coming in from the office the other evening I overheard Mother Thompson quizzing our garden adviser W. R. B. about his beautiful lawn. She asked him how he kept his lawn looking so nice and green when so many other people had trouble at this season of the year with brown spots and dead grass.

Above the rattle of my old car I heard him say, "plant food and elbow grease." And that's all I wanted to know, because to my way of thinking that's the story of a good lawn. And the person who is willing to put thought and elbow grease along with plenty of plant food in the form of fertilizers and compost into the making of his lawn generally succeeds in having one of the best lawns in his community.

I have learned from hard-earned experience, that there are certain principles involved in the making of a good lawn. One thing a lawn needs is good drainage. A lawn needs plenty of moisture in the soil, but the presence of standing water means that the grass simply won't grow.

Of course, your lawn may not need attention as to drainage just now because this is the dry season in most sections, but the condition of your grass at this season of the year can sometimes be traced to wet feet and poor drainage last spring. So drainage, after all, is not necessarily a seasonal, but more generally a year-'round proposition. My plan is to provide drainage in some form or other where the subsoil is so tight that water won't pass through it readily.

And in addition to soil drainage I sometimes find it advisable to provide surface drainage. Wherever water stands in pockets on the surface of a lawn for any length of time it is sure to kill the grass. I try to avoid these pockets

All Regions.

in my lawn by carefully grading the surface before it is seeded. But I don't always succeed. Occasionally I find I have to go over my lawn and fill in the water pockets or depressions with rich soil. After filling in the pockets, I seed the bare spots.

Of course, to have a good lawn you need a good soil. W.R.B. believes that more than half of the lawn failures can be traced to poor soils. I agree with him, too. Just last year a man built a new house on our street, It was a nice house too. When it was finished he wanted a nice lawn in keeping with the house. But how do you suppose he went about getting it? Well, I'll tell you. He took the easiest route. He simply leveled down the poor, hard clay from the basement and sowed the seed in that. And he was disappointed.

I've seen people make a good lawn on a clay soil, but they added plant food in some form to the clay before they seeded the grass. W.R.B's plan of making a lawn on a clay soil is to spread 3 or 4 inches of rich top soil over the clay and seed the grass in that.

Another way to get a lawn on a clay soil is to work plenty of fertilizer and well rotted manure into the top 5 or 6 inches of clay. You may also have to use some lime in the soil.

Lawn specialists of the Department of Agriculture recommend a fertilizer mixture made up of equal parts by weight of bone meal and cottonseed meal. They recommend that this mixture be worked into the soil at the rate of from 5 to 8 pounds of the fertilizer to every 100 square feet of lawn surface. They say, spread the fertilizer first, and then spade it into the soil to a depth of 4 to 6 inches, and thoroughly mix it with the soil.

You can improve heavy clay soils considerably by adding a little sand or sifted coal ashes, especially ashes or cinders from "soft coal." And you can improve sandy soils by adding a heavier soil, such as clay.

I have observed that it takes quite a bit of time and work to prepare a good seed bed for a lawn. If you get in a hurry and neglect or slight the preparation of the seed bed, that neglect will show up later on in the form of thin places, dead grass, and barren spots, in the lawn. So, my suggestion is, take time, and prepare a good seed bed if you want a good lawn. And remember, it takes considerable time for the soil to settle after it has been spaded or plowed. When the seed bed does settle, it often settles unevenly leaving depressions here and there. You can overcome these troubles by frequent rakings and rollings. There's nothing better than a heavy roller packing the soil. And by alternate rakings and rollings you can get a surface that is smooth, firm, and even. And that's what you want for a beautiful lawn.

End of All Regions.

Regions 2, 11, & Upper 3

Many of our soils are very poor, and are so acid that the more common lawn grasses like bluegrass will not do well upon them. You can get around this two ways; one is to improve the soils by the adding of lime, manure, fertilizers, and by drainage, so that bluegrass will grow upon them. The other way is to enrich the soil and then plant one of the bent grasses for our lawns.

With the exception of the creeping bent, you can get the seed of the bent grasses at seedstores that specialize in this type of seeds. Creeping bent is largely used for golf greens, and is propagated by runners or stolons.

Creeping bent makes a beautiful lawn, provided it is properly cared for, but it takes a lot more attention and work than bluegrass. The usual way to establish creeping bent is to first prepare and fertilize the soil of your lawn, then get a supply of cuttings or plants from a nursery. If you set the plants 12 or 15 inches apart on good soil they will soon spread and cover the whole area. One of the difficulties with the bent grasses is that they are subject to a disease known as "brown patch". Unless creeping bent lawns are very carefully handled, "brown patch" is almost sure to appear and make the lawn unsightly. In many cases where the soil is extremely acid, it will undoubtedly pay to apply lime and fertilizers while fitting the soil for seeding, then plant a lawn grass mixture having bluegrass as its main ingredient.

Regions lower 3 & 7

For this section of the country we have about three or four grasses that are suitable for our lawns. Carpet grass is included in that list. These grasses can be started from seed or by setting out pieces of the plant.

On our heavier soils Bermuda grass is one of our best lawn grasses. But it has that unfortunate habit of turning brown in dry weather and dying down in the winter.

But you can overcome that objection by mowing your lawn very closely late in the fall, and raking in 4 or 5 pounds of Italian ryegrass to each 1,000 square feet. That makes a beautiful lawn during the winter.

In the sections where the winters are mild, Centipede grass is becoming quite popular. And it's a good grass too. But don't try to grow it on wet soil. Centipede grass has to be started by setting the plants. You can't get the seed in this country.

Then there's the St. Augustine grass. I don't believe it has an equal in this section when it comes to covering a lawn, unless it be carpet grass. It grows in the shade as well as in the sun. And when given plenty of water and fertilizer it will grow under practically all conditions. But it has to be starte from the plant. You can't get the seed.

Regions 4, 5, 8, 9 and Northern 10

The next problem is to decide what kind of grass to plant. W.R.B. says that a mixture of blue grass, redtop, fescue, and white clover gives excellent results in this section.

He says that bluegrass is undoubtedly our best lawn grass, but that it is slow in starting, and that it takes about a year for it to become established. And so for immediate results, and until the blue grass gets a foot hold, he recommends the addition of redtop, fescue, and a small amount of white clover.

For shady places W.R.B. recommends the use of a grass with the latin or scientific name of Poa trivialis. It's a close relative of our common blue grass and stands the shade quite well. Chewings fescue, originally from New Zealand is another grass that grows well in the shade. In addition, it's a lover of sandy soils.

I have observed that grass fails to grow around trees and in shady places for two reasons. Plant food, and moisture. But you can overcome at least a part of that difficulty by fertilizing the grass a little heavier around the trees, and by giving it a little more water. That makes up for what the tree steals, and puts the grass on an equal footing with the other grass in the lawn. Another method would be to dig up the soil around the trees to a depth of 4 to 6 inches, add plenty of fertilizer and then reseed the soil.

Regions 6, Southern 10, and 12

The next step in the making of a lawn is to decide what kind of grass to plant. It's important that you use the right grass or the right combination of grasses and other plants.

Lawn specialists of the Department of Agriculture say that common Bermuda grass is just about as satisfactory for lawn purposes in this territory as anything we can get.

Kentucky Bluegrass makes a wonderful lawn, and it will grow in some places and under certain conditions in this section, especially where it is shaded a trifle and can be watered, but you can't always depend on it as you can on Bermuda grass.

A good many years ago some of our farmers began to experiment with Japan clover, now called lespedeza. And it wasn't long until that little plant had spread over a great deal of territory in the South, and incidentally worked its way into many of our lawns. Lespedeza is an annual, reseeds itself every year, and makes a very good companion in some sections for Bermuda grass. Bermuda grass is, of course, a perennial, and stays on the job year after year.

The biggest objection to Bermuda grass is that it turns brown in dry weather, and makes a dead-looking or brown-colored lawn during the winter months. But at that it makes a lawn for at least three-fourths of the year, and that's more than you can say for the average lawn grass in this section. Besides you can overcome that objection especially the winter one, by mowing the grass close in the fall, and raking in Italian ryegrass seed, at the rate of 4 or 5 pounds to each 1000 square feet. Ryegrass comes up quickly, gives you a green lawn during the winter, and dies down in the spring about the time Bermuda grass starts to grow.

ALL REGIONS

I find it necessary to go over my lawn about twice a year and give it what Mother Thompson calls a renovation. And I believe that most lawns need special attention about twice a year, once in the spring, and again in the late summer or early fall.

W.R.B. says that the fall season is a good time to renovate lawns in this territory because it gives you a chance to find and reseed, replant, or resod the thin or dead patches of grass. Fall renovation has another advantage too. It gives you an opportunity to find and pull up the left over weeds before they mature and go to seed. And that's important too, because sometimes weeds get so bad in a lawn that it's almost impossible to get them out and save enough grass to form the basis of a new lawn.

In case of a dry season it will be necessary to water our lawns. And there's just one point in connection with the watering of a lawn that I want to emphasize. Don't just merely sorinkle your lawn in dry weather. When you water a lawn at this season, give it a good soaking, and then don't apply any more water for several days or until the lawn needs it.

And finally, if you want a nice looking lawn at this season of the year, keep it mowed, often but not too closely. Clip the edges around the flower beds, and keep the grass trimmed along the walks. And that takes "elbow grease," but that's what I told you in the beginning.

And now until this time next Wednesday, Mother Thompson and I bid you good bye and good luck.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT: And that, ladies and gentlemen, was Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS coming to you from Station _____ in _____.